

CLAIMS

1. A method for carrying out a bartering system over a network, comprising:

5 receiving a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire;

receiving a priority indication for at least one of i) each of the at least one needed item, and ii) each group of at least one item;

10 constructing the needs list with the priority indication into a barter protocol language; and

searching available items for a match with each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication wherein higher priority indicated needed items are attempted

15 to be matched before lower priority indicated needed items.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving an availability list having at least one available item the user desires to trade for the at least one needed item.

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3. The method of claim 1 wherein searching available items is performed first within a same bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the search within the same bartering

25 system.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needed items to at least one

of i) a common barter protocol language, and ii) a different barter protocol language of the different bartering system.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the needs list
5 further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each
near equivalent item having an associated priority
indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near
equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match
for the given needed item is not found.

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6. The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a
direct match having a one to one correspondence.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a
15 chained association involving the needs list and
availability lists of a plurality of users.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the priority
indication for a given needed item is indicated by a
20 monetary value that a user is willing to provide for the
needed item to carry out a bartering transaction.

9. The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving
a second priority indication for a given available item
25 indicating a user's desire to use the given available item
to carry out a bartering transaction.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the second priority
indication is indicated by a monetary value that the user is
30 willing to accept for the given available item.

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11. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a monetary value associated with each of the at least one needed item.

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12. The method of claim 11 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a payment value for a given needed item from the monetary value.

13. The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving a monetary value associated with each of the at least one available item.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a received value for a given available item from the monetary value.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein the monetary value is received from data provided by a rating agency.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein the monetary value is received from data provided by a rating agency.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein the barter protocol language is in XML.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein each of the at least 5 one needed item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein each physical item and each nonphysical item has a corresponding representation 10 mechanism within the barter protocol language.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein the nonphysical item represents a needed service.

15 21. The method of claim 2 wherein each of the at least one available item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the nonphysical 20 item represents an available service.

23. The method of claim 2 further comprising indicating equivalency of at least one available item with at least one needed item.

25 24. The method of claim 2 further comprising finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least 30 one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

25. A barter protocol language comprising:

means for specifying a needs list of needed items for
5 each one of a plurality of users;

means for specifying an availability list of available
items for each one of the plurality of users;

10 means for specifying a priority indication for at least
one of i) each needed item, and ii) each group of at least
one item, indicating a corresponding user's priority for
acquiring the needed item; and

15 means for specifying a range of near equivalent items,
each near equivalent item having an associated priority
indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near
equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match
for the given needed item cannot be found.

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25 26. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein
the means for specifying the availability list of available
items further comprises means for indicating at least one
available item for being utilized in acquiring at least one
needed item.

27. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein
the language is one of a markup language.

28. The barter protocol language of claim 27 wherein
the mark up language is XML.

29. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein
5 each needed item and each available item has a corresponding
representation mechanism.

30. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein
the needed items and available items can be physical items
10 and nonphysical items.

31. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein
the nonphysical items are representative of services.

15 32. A computer system having means for carrying out
bartering over a network, comprising:
means for receiving a needs list having at least one
needed item a user desires to acquire;
means for receiving a priority indication for at least
20 one of i) each of the at least one needed item, and ii) each
group of at least one needed item;
means for constructing the needs list with the priority
indication into a barter protocol language; and
means for searching available items for a match with
25 each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority
indication wherein higher priority indicated needed items
are attempted to be matched before lower priority indicated
needed items.

33. The computer system of claim 32 further comprising means for receiving an availability list having at least one available item the user desires to trade for the at least one needed item.

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34. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the means for searching available items is performed first within a same bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the 10 search within the same bartering system.

35. The computer system of claim 34 further comprising means for translating the needed items to at least one of i) a common barter protocol language, and ii) a different 15 protocol language of the different bartering system before the searching is performed across the different bartering system.

36. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the needs 20 list further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each near equivalent item having an associated priority indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item is not found.

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37. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the match is a direct match having a one to one correspondence.

38. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the match is a chained association involving the needs list and availability lists of a plurality of users.

5 39. The computer system of claim 33 further comprising means for enabling an indication of equivalency of at least one available item with at least one needed item.

10 40. The computer system of claim 33 wherein the means for searching further comprises means for finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

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41. The computer system of claim 40 wherein the at least one given needed item and the at least one given available item are dissimilar items.

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